

LLANDUDNO

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Parish Magazine



50p

April 2009

Services

Holy Trinity Church, Mostyn Street

Sundays

- 8.00 am Holy Eucharist
- 10.30 am Sung Eucharist (1st, 3rd, 4th
& 5th Sundays)
- Matins followed by
shortened Eucharist (2nd
Sunday)
- 5.00 pm Evening Prayer
- 6.00 pm Exploring Worship - in
Church Hall (2nd Sunday
unless notified otherwise)

Weekdays

- 8.30 am Morning Prayer (Tue, Wed
& Thurs)
- Holy Eucharist with
Morning Prayer (Fri)
- 9.00 am Holy Eucharist (Wed)
- 11.00 am Holy Eucharist (Thurs &
Major Saints' Days)
- Holy Eucharist in Welsh
(Sat)
- 5.00 pm Evening Prayer (Tue, Wed,
Thurs & Fri)



Plwyf Llandudno
Parish of Llandudno

St. Tudno's Church Great Orme

- 9.00 am Morning Prayer (Sat)
- 11.00 am Open Air Service (Sun
from end of May to end of
September)
- On the first Sunday of
each month, the service is
followed by a shortened
Eucharist in the church.

The pattern of Sunday and Weekday services sometimes changes. Please check the calendar in each month's magazine and the weekly bulletin.

The Rector is in Holy Trinity church on most Saturday mornings from 11.30 - 12.00 to see parishioners on any matter – for confessions, spiritual guidance, the booking of baptisms or weddings etc.

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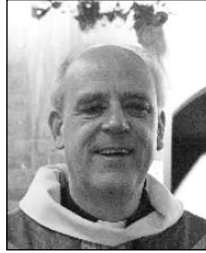
The deadline for copy for any edition is the 7th of the previous month. Please leave copy in box near pulpit in Holy Trinity Church or e-mail:

editor@llandudno-parish.org.uk

Copy may be on disk, printed or handwritten.

From the Rectory

This month I'm going to trespass into our esteemed editor's territory a little by thinking about some of the great music of Holy Week and Easter. I hope he won't mind!



Can you imagine life without music? For most of us it is a vital part of our lives whether we are performers or simply listeners. As Christians we rely upon it to enhance our worship and devotion. And what an amazing variety of styles of sacred music we have to choose from – everything from ancient plainsong (as a Benedictine Oblate very close to my heart!) all the way through to the modern worship songs of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Within this wide spectrum each of us will have our own preferences and dislikes.

In Holy Week and at Easter music is especially helpful in enabling us to enter into the mystery of Our Lord's passion, death and resurrection with devotion. For instance, on Palm Sunday it just wouldn't seem right to have the Procession without singing the hymn 'All Glory Laud and Honour' to the tune *St. Theodulph*. Strangely it is the words that are by the 9th century St. Theodulph of Orleans rather than the tune named after him! These words, translated by John Mason Neale, express so simply the essence of Christ's

triumphant entry into Jerusalem: *'All glory, laud and honour to thee Redeemer, King, to whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring ... The people of the Hebrews with palms before thee went; Our praise and prayer and anthems before thee we*

present.' But the strong but simple tune *St. Theodulph* written in the 17th century by M. Teschner and later adapted and harmonised by J.S. Bach is an ideal companion to the words allowing them to express our thoughts and feelings as in spirit we join with the Hebrews who welcomed Christ into the Holy City.

Later in the Palm Sunday Eucharist at Holy Trinity we usually move on in word and music to the late 20th century by singing as an offertory hymn Graham Kendrick's 'The Servant King', which I believe to be one of the greatest hymns of our time, standing head and shoulders above what in my opinion are so many banal and shallow contemporary worship songs written today. Again we have a wonderful combination of music and words, each enhancing the other and in this case both composed by the same person. *'Come see his hands and his feet, the scars that speak of sacrifice, hands that flung stars into space, to cruel nails surrendered. This is our God, the Servant King, he calls us now to follow him....'* These are profound words getting us very close to the inner heart of the

incarnation and the Passion of Christ. And once again it is the music which strengthens and deepens the words drawing us ever closer to Christ.

If I had space I could go through each of the great services of HolyWeek and Easter to show how similar combinations of words and music enhance and deepen our worship. We are so lucky at Holy Trinity to have an organist and choir of such quality that the music can indeed raise us to heaven. Listen especially to the Reproaches sung on Good Friday – this is an ancient text in which God reproaches his people for all the things they have done to him despite his love for them: *'My people, what have I done to you? How have I offended you? Answer me!'* A long list of Old Testament examples are given climaxing in what

they have done to the Christ: *'I gave you a royal sceptre, but you gave me a crown of thorns. I raised you to the height of majesty, but you have raised me high on a cross.'* As we listen to these words sung to the glorious music of Vittoria we are likely to be moved to tears of penitence as we are aware of God's love for us and our frequent betrayals of him.

I invite you all to come and share in the worship of HolyWeek and Easter, to die with Christ and to be raised with him, and to allow the music of this sacred season to play its proper part in all that we do.

May you all know the joy and peace of the crucified and risen Christ!

Fr John

The Parish Share or 'Quota' for 2009 is £73442

The Quota is the sum of money that we have to contribute to pay the stipends of our clergy. In 2007 and 2008, we partially paid this sum from our reserves. This year the increase is £5030 more than 2008 (7.35% more) and we do not have the reserves.

If you are able, please consider revising your regular giving so the Parish can pay its dues.

If you are a payer of income tax or capital gains tax, please declare regular giving and donations as 'Gift Aid' so HM Customs and Revenue might refund to us the tax you paid on earning your gift.

If you make a donation of £10, the Parish receives an extra £2.50 at no cost to you.

Please contact Stan Whittaker, the Gift Aid Secretary. (Tel: 596796)

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News and Notices

Holy Week & Easter

Our services during this important time in the Church Year will be very much the same as in previous years and a full list of them can be found elsewhere in this magazine. Do try to come to as many of the special liturgies as you possibly can. By being present as we move from Palm Sunday through Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Day it is easier to appreciate the Passion, Death and Resurrection of the Lord as one event rather than a series of disconnected ones. We can also feel that we are making this commemoration as a parish family, sharing the various moments with each other as well of course as with Our Lord himself. Last year we published a guide to all the special services, I am not reproducing this in 2009 but if you have any questions about any of these please do not hesitate to ask.

Fr John

Easter Communion

If you are unable, because of illness, to get to Church at Easter the parish clergy will be glad to bring Communion to you at home. Regular house communicants will of course receive this as a matter of course but anyone who is not on the regular House Communion list and needs communion at home is

asked to contact Jane or myself as soon as possible and we will be please to arrange to bring you the sacrament of Our Lord's Body and Blood.

Fr John

Easter Vestry

For various reasons our 2009 Easter Vestry meeting will be held on a weekday evening – Thursday April 30th at 7.30 pm – rather than the usual Sunday. We hope that this will not deter those on the parish electoral roll from attending this important annual meeting during which we consider aspects of the life of the parish, elect Churchwardens, PCC members etc.

Fr John

Conwy County Cytûn Dinner

Some of you may not realise that as well as our local Cytûn in Llandudno there is also a 'regional' Cytûn which seeks to represent churches and local Cytûn groups throughout the County Borough of Conwy. At present I am the Llandudno Cytûn representative on the Conwy County Cytûn Committee. One of the events planned by the Conwy County Cytûn for this year is a special dinner to be held at St Wini-fred's Christian Centre, Rhos-on-Sea

on at 6.30 for 7.00 pm on Wednesday 22nd April. Tickets for this (£10 each) will soon be available and there are some forms in church for you to fill in if you are interested. This is an opportunity to meet fellow Christians from all over Conwy.

Fr John

Coffee Morning date for your diary

Saturday 25th April at Holy Trinity Church Hall from 10.00 am until 1.00 pm.

This is an annual event where the Parish Fellowship raises money for worthwhile causes. This year we are supporting the Pensychnant Nature Conservation Centre with which the Fellowship has a long association, the Welsh Ambulance Service First Response Unit which the members hope

they will not need but find it comforting to know it's there. We also hope to give some money towards Church Funds. Please support us and we look forward to greeting you in our familiar friendly way.

Vernon Morris

Charity Status

Later this year the parish has to register as a charity. Legally, little will change as the parish is already a charity and the members of the PCC, be they ex-officio, elected or co-opted, are the existing trustees of the charity/parish.

Nevertheless, it will henceforth be necessary for the names of trustees to be registered with the Charity Commission and for declarations to be completed.

Andy Leitch, PCC Secretary

Attendance Figures for February

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|----|
| Sunday 1st | 8.00 am | Holy Eucharist | 19 |
| Presentation of Our Lord | 10.30 am | Sung Eucharist | 78 |
| | 5.00 pm | Evening Prayer | 6 |
| | Total of Weekday Eucharists | | 27 |
| Sunday 8th | 8.00 am | Holy Eucharist | 13 |
| 3rd Sunday before Lent | 10.30 am | Choral Matins | 65 |
| | | Shortened Eucharist | 11 |
| | 10.30 am | Holy Eucharist (Sunday School) | 12 |
| | 5.00 pm | Evening Prayer | 7 |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|----|
| | 6.00 pm | Exploring Worship | 36 |
| | Total of Weekday Eucharists | | 27 |
| Sunday 15th | 8.00 am | Holy Eucharist | 16 |
| 2nd Sunday before Lent | 10.30 am | Sung Eucharist | 82 |
| | 5.00 pm | Evening Prayer | 6 |
| Thursday 19th | 11.00 am | Requiem Eucharist` (Elwyn Roberts, Priest) | 12 |
| | Total of Other Weekday Eucharists | | 14 |
| Sunday 22nd | 8.00 am | Holy Eucharist | 17 |
| Sunday before Lent | 10.30 am | Sung Eucharist | 95 |
| | 5.00 pm | Evening Prayer | 10 |
| Wednesday 25th | 9.00 am | Holy Eucharist* | 10 |
| Ash Wednesday | 11.00 am | Holy Eucharist* | 44 |
| | 7.30 pm | Holy Eucharist* | 14 |
| | | *with Imposition of Ashes | |
| | Total of Other Weekday Eucharists | | 13 |

From the Parish Registers

The Departed

February 3rd: Kenneth Goodier (93)
of Abbey Nursing Home, Llandudno
(Cremation at Colwyn Bay)

February 6th: Nancy Patricia Morris (88)
of St Andrew's Avenue, Llandudno
(Cremation at Colwyn Bay)

February 20th: Ada Jones (84)
of Queen Elizabeth Court, Craig-y-Don
(Cremation at Colwyn Bay)

February 26th: Melanie Beth Jones (50)
of Bryn Marl Nursing Home, Llandudno Junction
(Cremation at Colwyn Bay)



Ben Edwards, Barbara Yates and Jasmine Lawson after the Mothering Sunday service on 22 March.



During the Mothering Sunday service, the Mothers' Union welcomed two new members: Barbara Hughes (left) and Sarah Dean (right). They are pictured with Barbara Yates and the Rector, the Rev Canon John Nice.

A Variable Feast

I received my first computer during the mid-80s whilst in hospital. In those days, not many applications were available and many enthusiasts took to writing programs of their own using the BASIC language compiler that came with the machines.

One of the first functional programs that I wrote used one of the algorithms printed in the Book of Common Prayer to determine the date of Easter. Before too long I had printed a sheet of paper outlining the dates of Easter for the next 50 years or so. I presented this to the chaplain – ‘handy for the vestry wall Padre.’

The next day I presented the chaplain with another paper outlining the dates of Christmas. It was only after he started to thank me that he realised that he had been set up.

It was only then that I considered the subject of variable and fixed feasts in the church calendar. History does not record the year that Christ was born and died, yet alone the date. So the dates of these festivals were chosen by the Church.

Christmas may have been determined by the date of the winter equinox or a Roman solar holiday. But Easter is different. The clue lies in the Greek word for Easter – *Pascha* which is derived from the Hebrew – *Pesach* – the

festival of the Passover. The New Testament dates the Last Supper and Jesus’ crucifixion as being at the time of the Passover. St. Paul wrote: ‘For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.’ This identifies Jesus as the ‘Paschal lamb.’

Traditionally, the first day of Passover occurred on the 15th of Nisan which began on the night of the full moon after the vernal equinox. In the early church, the date of Easter was not without contention, but since the Middle Ages, Easter is observed on the Sunday after the first full moon on or after the day of the vernal equinox.

However, this does not reflect the actual ecclesiastical rules precisely. One reason for this is that the full moon involved (called the Paschal full moon) is not an astronomical full moon, but the 14th day of a calendar lunar month. Another difference is that the astronomical vernal equinox is a natural astronomical phenomenon, which can fall on March 20th or 21st, while the ecclesiastical date is fixed by convention on March 21st.

Though all churches apply these rules, they do not use the same calendar: Western churches use the Gregorian calendar and Eastern churches the Julian calendar which explains why the dates of Easter have diverged.

Editor

HOLY WEEK & EASTER 2009

PALM SUNDAY

8.00 am Eucharist
10.30 am PALM PROCESSION & SUNG EUCHARIST
5.00 pm Evening Prayer with Lenten Address

Monday of Holy Week

2.30 pm Mothers' Union Quiet Afternoon (all welcome)

Tuesday of Holy Week

10.15 am Stations of the Cross
11.00 am Holy Eucharist

Wednesday of Holy Week

9.00 am Holy Eucharist
7.30 pm Stations of the Cross
8.15 pm Informal Eucharist

MAUNDY THURSDAY

11.00 am Eucharist
7.30 pm EUCHARIST OF THE LAST SUPPER
Followed by Vigil until Midnight
(The Vigil ends with Compline at 11.50 pm)

GOOD FRIDAY

10.30 am Children's Worship for Good Friday
11.45 am Cytûn Procession of Witness
(meet at Emmanuel Christian Centre)
2.00 pm LITURGY OF THE CROSS

HOLY SATURDAY

7.30 pm EASTER VIGIL at St. Tudno's

EASTER DAY

8.00 am Holy Eucharist
10.30 am FESTAL EUCHARIST
5.00 pm Choral Evensong
6.30 pm Exploring Worship

Calendar for April

| | | |
|-----------|----------|---|
| Wed 1st | 7.00 pm | Compline in the Hospital Chapel |
| | 7 45 pm | Discussion Group at Harbour Light, Maesdu Avenue. |
| Thurs 2nd | 10.00 am | Guild of St. Raphael Meeting |
| | 11.00 am | Eucharist with Ministry of Healing |
| Fri 3rd | 11.00 am | Guild of St. Raphael Service in Hospice Chapel |
| | 7.30 pm | Standing Committee |

Sun 5th Palm Sunday
(For Holy Week & Easter Services please see separate notice)

Sun 12th Easter Day

the Risen Christ

Tues 14th 10.00 am Julian Meditation Group – Stella Maris

Sun 19th Easter 2

Services at the usual times

Tues 21st Eucharist for members of the Governing Body of the Church in Wales (time to be advised)

Wed 22nd 7.15 am Morning Prayer & Eucharist for members of the Governing Body

7.00 pm *Conwy County Cytûn Dinner at St Winifred's Christian Centre, Rhos-on-Sea*

Thurs 23rd 2.30 pm Afternoon Tea for Guild of St Raphael's USPG AIDS projects.

7.30 pm PCC Meeting

Sat 25th **St. Mark, Evangelist**

11.00 am Yr Offeren

Sun 26th Easter 3

Services at the usual times with the addition of

1.00 pm Holy Baptism

2.30 pm Scout Service

Thurs 30th 7.30 pm Easter Vestry Meeting



Members of the Exploring Worship Choir after singing 50 hymns on 21 March. Proceeds went to the Anthony Nolan Trust. Many thanks go to the Choir and their supporters.

Sidespersons

| | | | |
|----------|--|----------|---|
| Apr 5th | Barbara Yates Ray Millington Annabel Jones Joyce Crosby | Apr 26th | Stan Whittaker Doug Pritchard Barbara Scott Adele Arrowsmith |
| Apr 5th | Sandra Davies Mary Rees Stan Whittaker Judith Williams | May 3rd | Barbara Yates Ray Millington Sandra Davies Joyce Crosby |
| Apr 19th | Dorothy Trent Angela Pritchard Pat Ridler Eira Jones | | |

Llandudno Youth for Christ News

From: Rev Peter Marshall, Chairman, Executive Committee

We were greatly encouraged by our open meeting in January attended by over 60 people, representing twelve local churches. Martin Dickson, from Wirral YFC was the speaker, and recalled his family holidays in Llandudno! In March there was an open meeting for young people, and eleven attended, from four churches. You would have been interested to hear them discuss 'Why so few young people go to church,' some quite powerful home truths! Anyway, we listened, and asked how they could better be encouraged in their Christian lives, and be helped share their faith with others at school. That is what Youth for Christ is all about.

In the past three months we have had promises of financial support. This has made us confident enough to advertise the post for a full time experienced Youth and Schools worker, with a view to opening a YFC Centre in Llandudno. We already have our eyes on one or two possible places, more accessible than Mission House, Penrhynside was. As I write we have had fourteen enquiries about the post, and plans for interviews are being made.

This last month has seen the launch of our website www.llandudno-yfc.co.uk



which can also be accessed through the Llandudno Churches Together Web site. Everything seems to happen on the Internet, and I have had to learn new skills, also have joined FaceBook.

All being well, Llandudno Youth for Christ will be launched at Venue Cymru on Sunday April 19th at the final meeting of the ECG Conference at 7.00 pm. It would be a tremendous encouragement to have as much local support as possible. Do come along.

We do value the prayers of all local church members. We are sending out regular 'prayer news' to those who would like to receive it. Contact me either through our web page 'Support' or drop me a note care of Kingdom Krafts, 30 Madoc Street, Llandudno LL30 2TL.

It was a great cause of thanksgiving to hear that, unprompted except by God, an anonymous local church member is giving us £1,000 a year for the next three years towards the salary of the first Llandudno YFC worker. Praise God indeed!

A Trilogy

Over the next three months, I would like to share with you a talk I heard two years ago at Greenbelt, the great Christian festival that takes place each year over three days at Cheltenham racecourse. Please do not be offended by the title – it is the speaker's, not mine, and clearly designed to attract a large audience. (It was successful!) The speaker was Nigel Varndell, the inter-faith manager for Christian Aid.

Garth

Jesus was a Liar (part 1)

There are three places in Mark's gospel where Jesus, if not telling an outright lie, is certainly economical with the truth. He uses this technique to teach a very important message. He is not trying to be deceitful, but provocative. The lies are not subtle; they are blindingly obvious. Everyone in his audience would have known what he was trying to do. He was lying to draw attention to the point he was making.

The first reading is Mark 12: 28-34. Put down this magazine now and go and read those words for yourself before you come back to this article. Otherwise, you get the answer before you try to puzzle it out for yourself.

OK. Did you spot the lie? You probably did not, because you are not a

first-century Jewish scribe. We are not familiar with the original passage that Jesus is using and we've heard these words so many times that they sound normal and right to us.

What Jesus is quoting is the *Shema*. The *Shema* is an affirmation of Judaism and a declaration of faith in one God. It reaffirms the basic tenets of Jewish faith and you can find it in Deuteronomy 6: 4-9. A devout Jew would have prayed these words two or three times every day.

However, Jesus deliberately does not quote correctly, and his listeners would certainly have noticed his changes.

There are two vital differences. Let's look at the more minor one first.

Jesus inserts an extra clause. You shall love the Lord your God with all your mind. You won't find that word in the *Shema*.

The passage comes immediately after two confrontation stories. In the first, the Herodians and the Pharisees ask Jesus about paying taxes. It is a coded question as to whether Jesus was advocating an armed revolt against Rome. In about 7 AD, Judas the Galilean had rebelled against a Roman census that was being conducted for tax purposes. The rebellion was brutally put down. So, the question is no polite query about taxes. It is a question of whether the people should pay tribute to Rome. Should

they revolt? Jesus can't say 'yes' and he can't say 'no'. One implies he wants a war; the other implies that Roman oppression and taxation are OK. We know how Jesus gets off the hook.

The next thing is that the Sadducees come to Jesus and ask about a man who has been married several times and therefore to whom will he be wed to in the afterlife. The Sadducees don't believe in an afterlife(!), so this, too, is a trick question. Jesus gets angry and tells them contemptuously that they don't even know what their scriptures are saying.

And then comes the scribe, who asks what he must do to get eternal life. And Jesus says, 'you need to love God with all your mind'. It is highly pointed that, after Jesus has been faced with the intelligentsia of the day, he says that we must love God with our minds. Almost with a weary sigh, Jesus says 'You're not there to trick people; just use your minds to love God'. It is a lovely, sharp, subtle put-down. Get your priorities right; stop wasting time on pointless attempts to trick me. You need to be more worried about how you are going to live your life.

However, all that is a bit of a side issue. The thunderbolt comes next. Having quoted the start of the *Shema*, the prayer that is central to all Jewish worship, Jesus says 'you shall love your neighbour as yourself'. That is the killer line, and we miss it because we hear it so often in church. Jesus has jumped

from the middle of the most important prayer in Jewish liturgy and has added in an entirely different quote. He goes from Deuteronomy to Leviticus in one sentence. We don't notice, whereas every practising Jew would have been aghast. 'That's not what it says!'

Jesus is changing a central liturgical injunction. And what has he added in? The passage about loving your neighbour is not content-free 'nice' stuff. The passage is from Leviticus 19:18, but you must read it in the context of what comes before it. The chapter is about social justice. It is about not stripping the vineyard bare. Leave some for the poor. Don't steal. Don't defraud. Don't withhold a labourer's wages. Don't render an unjust judgement. Don't profit from the blood of your neighbour. Love your neighbour as yourself.

When Jesus says 'Love your neighbour', it is not hypothetical. It is rooted in Biblical injunctions about how the poor and the marginalised are to be treated. Loving your neighbour is not some warm fuzzy feeling; it is real, economic, practical justice. When the scribe, as an observant Jew, asked the question, he would have expected the answer that Jesus started giving. The *Shema* – love the Lord your God. But what he got was rather different - elaborated, added to, exaggerated. Jesus lied about what the *Shema* said.

Nigel Varndell (adapted)



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Spring bursts today

'Spring bursts today, for Christ is risen and all the earth's at play.' So begins a poem by Christina Rossetti, which is also sung as a hymn when set to the music *Spring* by Martin Shaw (*Songs of Praise hymnbook*).

A favourite spring time flower is the primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), which I used to think of as mainly a woodland plant. However, on the Great Orme the primrose shows how well adapted it is to a range of habitats and it can be seen flowering in profusion on cliffs and banks on the north side of the Orme in particular. A walk or drive around Marine Drive during April may be well rewarded by the sight of primroses and cowslips (*Primula veris*) bursting into flower.

Most *Primula* species have evolved two different types of flower which prevent any individual plant from being pollinated by its own pollen and thus becoming in-bred. These flowers are known as 'pin' and 'thrum' types, as shown in the photos (right).

In the 'pin' type of flower, the style (which receives the pollen) extends to the opening of the flower, while the anthers (which produce the pollen)

remain nearer the base of the flower. In the 'thrum' type of flower the positions are reversed and it is the anthers which reach the opening. The flowers are cross-pollinated by insects, usually bees, butterflies or moths, which partly enter a flower to reach the nectar produced at the base. Pollen from a 'pin' type of flower could be deposited on the insect's head and that from a 'thrum'



Primrose with 'pin' type flower (top) and primrose with 'thrum' type flower (bottom).

flower on its back and so be transferred to the style of the opposite flower type if the insect later fed there.

Plants are either 'pin' or 'thrum' types and a 'pin' type could not, physically, pollinate itself. In theory, pollen from a 'thrum' flower could fall on its own style resulting in self-pollination but the style matures before the stamens and so self-pollination cannot occur. Darwin showed that artificially pollinating 'pin' flowers with 'pin' pollen or 'thrum' flowers with 'thrum' pollen rarely resulted in production of viable seeds and more recent research has shown that different size pollen grains from 'pin' and 'thrum' flowers contribute to the self-sterility.

Primroses, cowslips and their relatives are therefore highly dependent upon their insect pollinators and without the presence of suitable insects, seeds will not be produced. In the past, primroses and cowslips have also suffered from over-picking, so perhaps the steep slopes of the Great Orme have given them some protection here.

Do go and look at the primroses if you are able too and you may feel like joining in with the last line of Christina Rossetti's poem:

'Sing, creatures, sing, angels and men and birds, and everything.'

Christine Jones



My Lady Spring

**Winter casts off her
Mantle of grey,
Revealing many colours where
Snow once lay;
Tiny flowers peep from
Sweet tender grass,
Golden daffodils sway gently in
A fragrant mass.
Trees once bare
Rich with buds
Soon to be transformed
Into leafy woods.
My lady spring has arrived
Dressed in her gown of green;
She brings a brush and palette
To create her own delightful
scene.**

(Gloria Wilkes)

Great Hymns — To be a pilgrim

I was introduced to John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* at school by means of cardboard/felt characters hopefully secured onto a felt background. Unfortunately Velcro hadn't become universal causing Christian and Co to make their unscheduled descents onto the classroom floor. I must have got the idea though some of the allegorical meaning was quite beyond me.

John Bunyan was born in 1628, at Elstow in Bedfordshire. Educated briefly in the local school, he became a tinker,

like his father. During the Civil War of 1646, he served in the parliamentary army. After 1653 he was a member of a Baptist congregation in Bedford and clashed with the Quakers. As a result, he wrote two religious pamphlets in 1656 and 1657 to defend his faith and began a new career as an itinerant preacher.

After being arrested in 1660, he spent most of the next 12 years in gaol for 'pertinaciously abstaining' from attending mandatory Anglican church services and preaching at 'unlawful meetings.' Incarcerated, he produced ten books, including his spiritual autobiography, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* in 1666, and started his most famous work, *Pilgrim's Progress*.

The Pilgrim's Progress (1678) relates how Christian journeyed to the Celestial City, his wife, Christiana, and children having refused to join him. Leaving his family members behind was a stroke of genius as it was their subsequent journey and salvation that was related in a sequel, *Part 2* (1684).

To be fair, *Part 2* is more than a sequel as it developed the themes of *Part 1* and suggested the revolutionary idea that women could be pilgrims too.

Near the end of their journey, Christiana and her fellows encounter a character called Mr Valiant-for-truth.

Pilgrim's Progress.--Part II.



Behold how things turn out—see *Christian's Wife*,
Who did oppose his heavenly road to life,
Now sets her face on Pilgrimage to go,
And leads her Babes to 'scape impending woe.

Perhaps based on Bunyan himself, Mr Valiant-for-truth was bloodied having fought and defeated three men – Wild-head, Inconsiderate and Pragmatick. In the text, there followed the following verses spoken or sung by Mr Valiant for truth:

*Who would true valour see,
Let him come hither;
One here will constant be,
Come wind, come weather
There's no discouragement
Shall make him once relent
His first avowed intent
To be a pilgrim.*

*Whoso beset him round
With dismal stories
Do but themselves confound;
His strength the more is.
No lion can him fright,
He'll with a giant fight,
But he will have a right
To be a pilgrim.*

*Hobgoblin nor foul fiend
Can daunt his spirit,
He knows he at the end
Shall life inherit.
Then fancies fly away,
He'll fear not what men say,
He'll labour night and day
To be a pilgrim.*

The rhyming is robust, the first half of each verse being awkward, possibly deliberately so, emphasising Mr Valiant-for-truth's struggle. The remaining triple-rhyming flows much more easily, representing the calm after the effort, culminating in the essential final line:.

The following variant of the song appeared in the *English Hymnal* (1906) and may be more familiar.

*He who would valiant be
'Gainst all disaster,
Let him in constancy
Follow the Master.
There's no discouragement
Shall make him once relent
His first avowed intent
To be a pilgrim.*

*Who so beset him round
With dismal stories
Do but themselves confound
His strength the more is.
No foes shall stay his might;
Though he with giants fight,
He will make good his right
To be a pilgrim.*

*Since, Lord, Thou dost defend
Us with Thy Spirit,
We know we at the end,
Shall life inherit.
Then fancies flee away!
I'll fear not what men say,
I'll labour night and day
To be a pilgrim.*

The rework was the hand of the Rev Percy Dearmer (1867-1936), socialist, Anglo-Catholic Vicar of St. Mary the Virgin, Primrose Hill, and leading light and editor of the *EH*. Dearmer later wrote: 'In 1904, we who were working at the *English Hymnal* felt that some cheerful and manly hymns must be added to the usual repertory [sic]; and this song sprang to mind. It was a daring thing to add [this] song to a hymn

book, and it had never been attempted before. To include the hobgoblins would have been to ensure disaster; to ask the congregation [], to invite all who come and look at them, if they wished to see true valour, would have been difficult. But when with the help of the marvellous folk-tune which Vaughan Williams had discovered we had made a great hymn, it became easy for our imitators to complain that we had altered the words. We felt that we had done rightly; and that no one would have been more distressed than Bunyan himself to have people singing about hobgoblins in church. He had not written it for a hymn, and it was not suitable as a hymn without adaptation.'

No doubt Dearmer's snifty 'imitators' included the longer-established *Hymns Ancient and Modern* which, in its 1916 supplement printed the original Bunyan song to a different tune. Both the Vaughan Williams'-discovered tune (*Monk's Gate* – more of which later) and Dearmer's hymn were copyrighted (the words only passed into the public domain in 2007 and the tune remains in copyright) and no doubt the editors of the A&M were anxious to avoid paying royalties to their upstart rival.

Even the A&M may have had its doubts about hobgoblins and substituted 'No goblin nor foul fiend' for 'Hobgoblin nor foul fiend.' Perhaps it thought that the presumed 'Neither' at the beginning of the line caused confusion but I cannot imagine to whom.

Dearmer's version is cosier but loses some of the impact of the original. The first four lines of each stanza now rhyme perfectly (except for 'stories'/'more is'). In the last stanza when it says 'Then fancies fly/flee away', what fancies? In the Bunyan, the fancies are the hobgoblins and foul fiends of Mr Valiant-for-truth but in the Dearmer version they are our personal unspecified fancies because the last verse substitutes the first for the third person.

As he explained, Dearmer did not seek to improve an existing hymn but to create an original based upon Bunyan yet conforming to his high church ideals with emphasis on art and beauty in worship. As such, both versions have their places though Vaughan Williams later regretted giving way to Dearmer in allowing what he considered the 'bowdlerisation' of the words. (A certain Mr Bowlder had published an expurgated edition of Shakespeare.) As a self-confessed atheist (later described as a 'cheerful agnostic'), he was hardly in a position to argue theology with Dearmer .

Inevitably, the politically correct brigade has had a stab at revising the words even further. Possibly oblivious of Bunyan's original concept of the words referring to a particular person, 'Who would true valour see' (Mr Valiant-for-truth), some compliers have further dumbed the first line down to '**All** who would valiant be' and have completely pluralised the hymn. 'Men' in stanza three line six has been neutered to

'they'. Consequently, the words owe even less to *Pilgrim's Progress*. Look for the hymn under 'H' or 'W' in *Hymns, Old and New* and you won't find it!

Modern congregations do not have the reservations that Dearmer feared a century ago and his alterations seem unnecessary to some. Similarly, many will conclude that the modern amendments are also unnecessary because they understand that context is everything and would not be offended by words written in the 17th century, especially by a man who championed women's pilgrimage. Surprisingly, for a song written while a man was imprisoned for his religious beliefs, the original words cross all denominations and would be acceptable to most religions. This could not be said of the altered versions.

As the Music Editor of the *EH*, Vaughan Williams largely resisted the temptation to pen his own tunes, preferring to source tunes from a wide variety of traditions including folk songs which he collected with a passion.

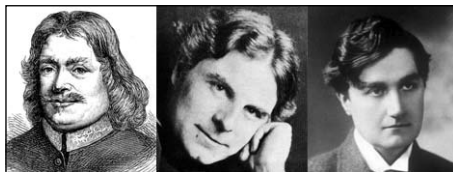
It is not absolutely clear whether Vaughan Williams' discovery of the melody or Dearmer's rewriting of the lyric came first. Vaughan Williams collected the song 'Our Captain Cried All Hands' from Mrs Harriet Verrall, of Monk's Gate, Horsham, in 1904 and this inspired the tune for the hymn. From what I can make from a modern recording of the folk song, it is in 11.11.11.11 time and needed a little reworking to

fit Bunyan's words (6.5.6.5.6.6.6.5). In any event, it was different enough to be copyrighted.

Vaughan Williams used *Monk's Gate* in a Bunyan revival at Reigate Priory in 1906, with the original words and was much later to write an opera *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1951). It is curious how an atheist/agnostic could be so engrossed by such an obviously spiritual work and perhaps his change of the character's name from 'Christian' to 'Pilgrim' confirms a strong spiritual if not Christian faith. Interestingly, his great uncle was Charles Darwin.

As noted earlier, the *A&M* used a different tune and several others have been associated with the words but most have failed the test of time. The only alternative tune that seems to be used today is *St. Dunstons* (Rev Canon Charles Winfred Douglas) written in 1917 and first published in a US Episcopalian hymnal the following year.

Hobgoblins or not, this is a wonderful rousing hymn where the tune has been skillfully matched to the words. Whatever version you prefer, neither would have been a great hymn without that great tune recalled by Harriet Verrall.



John Bunyan, Percy Dearmer and Ralph Vaughan Williams.